

AAS HISTORICAL ASTRONOMY DIVISION (HAD)

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2021-22

Kevin Krisciunas, Chair

March 24, 2022

Election

An election will be held this October to choose a new Vice-Chair and two Committee Members-at-Large. The Vice-Chair automatically advances to become HAD Chair after two years. Terry Oswalt, the present Vice-Chair, will automatically advance to become Chair next January.

Officers

The officers for 2021-22 continue to be Kevin Krisciunas (Texas A&M), Chair; Terry Oswalt (Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University), Vice-Chair/Chair-Elect; and Kenneth Rumstay (Valdosta State University, Emeritus), Secretary-Treasurer. The HAD Committee members-at-large are Amy Oliver (NRAO) and Samantha Thompson (National Air and Space Museum). Alan Hirshfeld (UMass Dartmouth) serves on the Committee as Past Chair.

Finances

As of 2021 January 1, balances for the three HAD accounts were as follows:

General Account: \$46,653.70
Leroy E. Doggett Prize Fund: \$55,774.15
Donald E. Osterbrock Book Prize Fund: \$40,502.25

An audited financial report for 2021 will appear in the forthcoming Spring 2022 issue of *HAD News*. Don Osterbrock's heirs are donating royalties from his books to the Osterbrock Book Prize Fund.

Membership

As of March 11, 2022, HAD has **431** active members, a 10 percent decrease compared to 12 months ago. The present breakdown is as follows: 146 Full members, 123 Emeritus members, 57 Graduate Student members, 31 Undergraduate Student members, 3 Divisional Affiliate members, and one Patron member. Other categories of Affiliate members include Amateur (31), HAD Division Affiliate only (16), Educator (18), and International (3). Two AAS staff are also regarded as HAD members. HAD will continue its efforts to attract Graduate and Undergraduate Student members, for whom there is no HAD membership fee.

Meetings

Due to the cancellation of the in-person Salt Lake City meeting, an HAD session has been planned for the June meeting in Pasadena, at which time the latest Doggett Prize Award winner (William Donahue) will give a plenary talk.

In lieu of a special session in Salt Lake City on the music and early career of William Herschel, a three hour online version, called “New Views on William Herschel (1738-1822),” took place via Zoom on March 5, 2022. This was organized by Woody Sullivan, who also gave the first talk. One highlight was a performance of portions of a viola concerto by William Herschel, performed by musician/astronomer David Koerner, who played the viola while also accompanying himself on the piano. Such is the magic that can be done with modern video editing!

Publications Updates

The newsletter of the Historical Astronomy Division, *HAD News*, is published online in the Spring and Fall of each year. HAD members are alerted to each new issue as it is posted. The Spring 2021 and Fall 2021 issues were prepared and published under the supervision of HAD Secretary-Treasurer Ken Rumstay.

Each month, as part of a series started in July 2016, the Historical Astronomy Division highlights in the *AAS News Digest* an important discovery or memorable event in the history of astronomy in- “This Month in Astronomical History”. This peer-reviewed column is among our division’s primary efforts to inform society colleagues about key events in the history of astronomy and, we hope, emphasize the relevance of historical studies in the field. The present editor is Michael Marotta, an amateur astronomer affiliated with the Astronomical League. At the end of the year he will be succeeded by Amy Oliver. The editor is responsible for soliciting submissions, providing guidance to authors throughout the editorial process, editing their work to conform to the division’s strict standards of publication, and coordinating the peer review of submitted copy by members of our division. In addition, there is a searchable, web-based archive of articles (<https://had.aas.org/resources/astro-history>), which also has a link to authors’²s guidelines for contributors to the column.

The following columns were published during 2021:

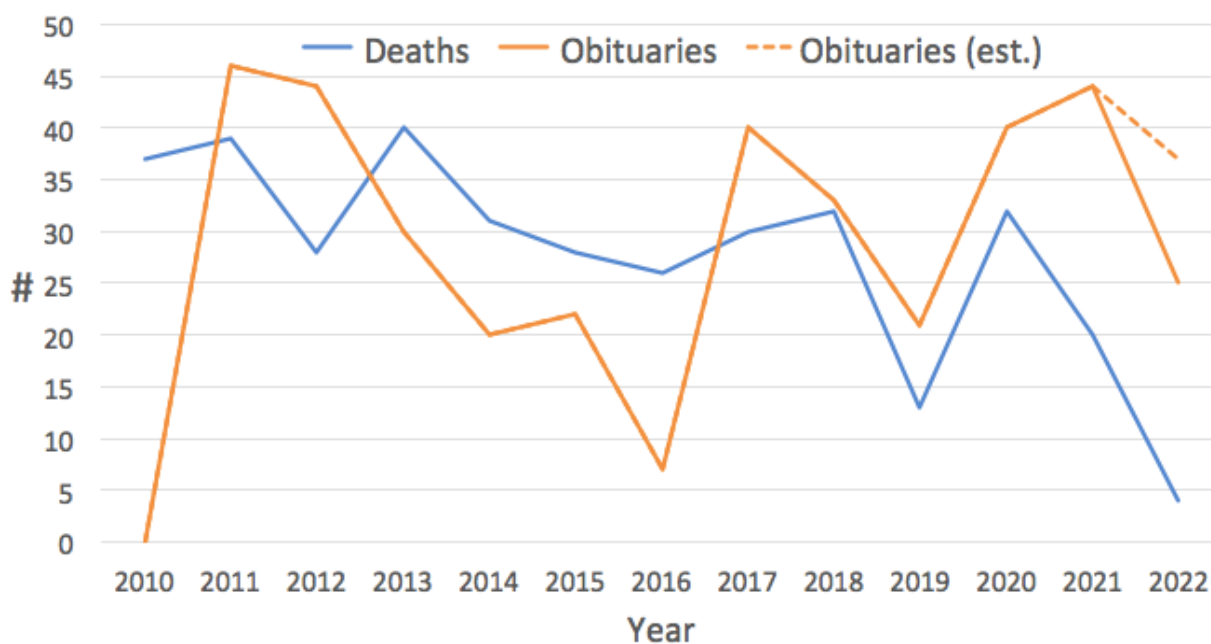
- December 2021: [The Order and Harmony of Johannes Kepler's Work: Celebrating the 450th Anniversary of His Birth](#)
Written by Dan Broadbent
- November 2021: [Stellar Parallax: A Critical Step in Mapping the Cosmos](#)
Written by Michael Wang
- October 2021: [The Crucial Years of Otto Struve](#)
Written by Kevin Krisciunas
- September 2021: [Biographical Sketches of Women Working at Yerkes Observatory and Harriet McWilliams Parsons](#)
Written by Rowen Glusman, Audrey Scott, Michael Martinez, Alexis Chapman, Amanda Muratore, Jorge Sanchez, and William Cerny
- August 2021: [1596: The Comet and the Red Star](#)
Written by Clifford J. Cunningham
- July 2021: [The First American PhDs in Astronomy](#)
Written by Joseph S. Tenn

- June 2021: [The 1761 Venus Transit from Wales](#)
Written by Martin Griffiths
- May 2021: [The Oldest Known Mechanical Calculator for Astronomy](#)
Written by Kurt Baty
- April 2021: [Observations of Supernova 1006](#)
Written by Alan Agrawal, MD
- March 2021: [Probing the Limits of the Earth's Magnetic Field](#)
Written by Michael Marotta
- February 2021: [Founding of the Astronomical Society of the Pacific](#)
Written by Linda Shore
- January 2021: [Galileo, Hubble, and the Arrangement of the Cosmos](#)
Written by Michael Marotta

Prizes

HAD has two endowed prizes. The Leroy E. Doggett Prize is given in even years to recognize lifetime achievement in the history of astronomy field. The Donald E. Osterbrock Book Prize, given in odd years, recognizes the best book published in the history of astronomy during a three-year period.

The 2022 Doggett Prize will be awarded to Dr. William Donahue (St. John's College, Santa Fe, New Mexico) at the Pasadena meeting this coming June.



AAS Member Obituaries

The HAD Vice-Chair is responsible for seeking authors to write obituaries of deceased AAS members. The AAS has moved all of the obituaries from aas.org to baas.aas.org when the main AAS website was relaunched this past year. The BAAS is hosted at MIT Press on the PubPub publishing platform. All of the obituaries that were on a previous site have been migrated and reformatted on the new site. The URL for the AAS obituaries website is <https://baas.aas.org/obituaries>.

There were 44 obituaries published online in the Bulletin of the AAS in 2021. We estimate that 37 will be published in 2022. Progress has been made with the backlog of obituaries needing to be written. This number hovered around 100 in recent years, but is now down to [how many?].

For further information or to volunteer to write an obituary of a deceased AAS colleague, please contact HAD Vice-Chair Terry Oswalt (oswaltt1@erau.edu).

HAD Student Travel Award

The HAD awards one or more travel awards to undergraduate and graduate students to present at the winter AAS meeting. No travel awards were given in 2021, as the winter meeting was cancelled.

HAD Bylaws

A thorough review of the HAD Bylaws was completed, and proposed amendments were approved by the AAS Board of Trustees and ratified by the HAD membership in the election of October, 2020. The various changes bring the HAD Bylaws into accord with updated AAS Bylaws, as well as clarify criteria for Affiliate Membership and HAD voting procedures and timelines.

AstroGen

The Astronomy Genealogy Project (AstroGen), spearheaded by Joseph Tenn, lists many of the world's astronomers, both past and present, with their academic parents (thesis advisors); currently there are approximately 33,000 theses recorded internationally. The online searchable database can be accessed at <https://astrogen.aas.org/front/index.php>. HAD contributed \$500 toward the completion of the project, whose earlier phases had been supported by a grant from the AAS.

Submitted 2022 March 24 by Kevin Krisciunas, Chair, AAS Historical Astronomy Division, Texas A&M University, krisciunas@physics.tamu.edu.